PUNJAB NOTES

Immigration and failure of multiculturalism

By Mushtaq Soofi

Joyful noises are no longer heard about the concept and practice of multiculturalism. The concept per se isn't new. Poets, philosophers and sages have explored it at different levels because the diversity with which it deals is as old as human society. It has always been an opportunity as well as a challenge. But its recent version popularised by the West has socio-economic and politico-cultural significance because of its overall dominance of the so-called global world.

According to Cambridge Dictionary, multiculturalism is the belief that different cultures within a society should all be given importance. It can also refer to a situation where all cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities, without any being ignored. The fundamental principle is that multiple cultures coexisting in a society should have equal standing and be valued. It is defined as a social state or a policy that promotes cultural diversity and pluralism. The cultural importance it holds is that it's a belief system where multiple cultures within a society are considered important and given equal weight, with the addition of equal rights and opportunities.

It suggests a social state where different cultural and racial groups coexist with equal rights and chances, and where no single culture is seen as dominant.

Multiculturalism can be a doctrine or policy that promotes or advocates for a multicultural social state, with it being often described using the metaphor of a "Cultural Mosaic" and "Melting Pot", showing the distinctness of different cultures with "Cultural Mosaic" rather than "Melting Pot" which implies the fusion into a singular culture.

Such a concept has been practiced for thousands of years in a low-key manner. Migration, internal and external, has shaped human society and its evolution. Our way of life, food habits, languages, architecture, music, arts, in short everything we enjoy and take pride in as ours has visible and invisible markings of borrowings from others. After the initial interaction resistance gives way to acceptance. What comes to your mind when you think of the subcontinent cuisine /food? Chilli, of course. But chilli is not of Indian origin. It was introduced here by Europeans.

By the mid-20th century colonialism had come to its end. But by this time colonising countries were sitting over huge piles of resources extracted and stolen from the colonies which were otherwise derided as resourceless and underdeveloped. These resources added to wealth and created new jobs by introducing modern and innovative sectors in industries and services. But at the same time such a development rendered a number of jobs unattactive for what was called Western lower ranks and middle classes. In the expanded job market they could pick and choose. Traditional and menial jobs got wages slashed. Hence the need arose of 'importing' foreign workers from diverse societies and cultural backgrounds. The policy was carefully crafted with a view not to give the foreign workers a free run. Bonding and resolve to secure their rights become doubly difficult among such a motley crowd on a foreign land. Problem with the non-Europeans, especially Muslim immigrants, has been severe. They had/have one common trait; a religious mindset that religiously guards their notion of religion which exhorts them to proselytise regardless of whether they are from the Middle East, South Asia or Africa. But this is not an isolated phenomenon as it was an outcome of the Cold War and international power politics.

American universities invented and popularised among Muslim societies the notion of political Islam to counter the Soviet Union and at the same time to crush the Leftists, democratic and liberal forces at the local level. The bedrock of political Islam has been Jihad. In other words, deadly fight against infidels and their godless system. The Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 provided a perfect opportunity. The US-led West and Islamic world created and nurtured a new breed; Jihadists and militant Islamists believing this was their holy war to save Islam from the clutches of communism and atheism. Groups and organisations loyal to this new ideology were funded, trained and launched in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. The result is there - destruction of Muslim countries and death of millions. Members of these extremist bodies were given free access to the western society. When the wind started blowing in opposite direction; stayed economy, increased joblessness, inflation, high cost of living and visible presence of immigrants with different skin colours and features, hoarse cries are being raised on the streets of Western countries 'take back control of the country' pretending as if the country is being controlled by conniving infiltrators disguised as hapless immigrants. This anti-immigrant campaign has recently been stirred up by the US white supermacist politicians. When they came into power they started doing what the representatives of imperial power do; use of force against what they call illegal aliens. Groups of bullies in uniforms hunting and humiliating poor people from poor countries.

In Europe, which is slightly more civilised than the US, political agitation is being used as a tool to purge it of non-white immigrants who are a threat to European nationalism and Christian values. This is not to say that immigrants, legal and illegal, are free of blame. Some of them have been involved in criminal activities. Many misuse laws and take advantage of loopholes in the laws. Certain groups such as some extremists Muslims want their religious laws implemented on foreign lands which provided them sanctuaries.

In a nutshell, multiculturalism has its bubble bust. This can be seen in the patriotic and nationalistic cacophony on the US and European streets.

CLARIFICATION: In Punjab Notes titled Quaid-i-Azam library and Punjabi books published on Oct 26, 2025, I made some critical remarks about DHA library, Lahore. Retired Col. Arslan Qadeer, Director Defence Public Library, contacted me and protested that I had given misleading information about the library. But he admitted that what was said about gender-based seating arrangement etc., was something that happened in the past. Currently there are no gender-based seatings, membership is open to all and no one is denied entry into the library.
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Two more FIA circles approved for Gujranwala region

The move aims to tackle increasing human-trafficking incidents in the region

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: The Federal Ministry of Interior has approved the establishment of two more Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) circles in the Gujranwala region for effective policing against human trafficking. As per a notification issued by the ministry, a new FIA circle would be established in Sialkot as well as a sub-circle in the Mandi Bahauddin district with the immediate effect.

Gujranwala FIA Director Muhammad Bin Ashraf told *Dawn* that the Sialkot circle would deal with the cases pertaining to Sialkot and Narowal districts, whereas the Mandi Bahauddin sub-circle was meant for the same district which had become a hub of human trafficking networks in the region.

Earlier, he said, the Sialkot and Narowal districts were being handled from the Gujranwala FIA circle and Mandi Bahauddin district was being handled by the Gujrat FIA circle. With the establishment of two more FIA circles, the Gujranwala region would now consist of three full circle and a sub-circle offices, he added.

He said the region was known for having a trend of settling in European countries through illegal means and this tarnished the country's image. Moreover, he said that the passengers who attempted to travel abroad through illegal means from the Sialkot airport, would now be handed over to the Sialkot FIA circle instead of being shifted to the Gujranwala anti-human trafficking cell.

Official sources said that an officer of the deputy director rank would head the Sialkot circle, whereas an assistant director was likely to head the Mandi Bahauddin sub-circle.

It is learnt that the Sialkot circle was being set up after it emerged that major human trafficking networks in the Sambrial and Pasrur tehsils of the district were involved in the boat capsize tragedies of December 2024 and January 2025.

Similarly, Mandi Bahauddin too had a high number of victims in the boat tragedies in recent years.

Officials said the trend to illegally migrate to Italy, Spain and other countries had also gained prominence in rural areas of the Sialkot district from the neighbouring Gujrat and Wazirabad districts.

Until 2008, there was only one FIA circle office working in Gujranwala for the whole region, however, an FIA police station was established in Gujrat around 17 years ago which was upgraded to a circle office in 2018 and Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin and Hafizabad districts were attached to the Gujrat circle.

The FIA Gujranwala zone director said that the staff in the newly-approved circle and sub-circle might be posted within a week or so as search for rented buildings to set up the offices in Sialkot and Mandi Bahauddin would be launched from tomorrow (Monday). Efforts would be made to make the new circles functional as soon as possible, he added.

Sikh pilgrims reach Gurdwara Darbar Sahib

NAROWAL: The three-day celebrations in connection with Baba Guru Nanak's 556th birth anniversary have begun at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur.

Sikh pilgrims from all over the world, including Pakistan and India, are participating in the event.

The pilgrims performed rituals at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and distributed sweets. They visited Museum Sahib, Missile Sahib, Kunwan Sahib, Art Gallery and other places. They were served with lunch at Baba Guru Nanak Langar Hall. The pilgrims coming from India were given a grand welcome by the district administration of Narowal in front of the District Complex on Shakargarh Road.

A kabaddi match was held between two Sikh teams in Kartarpur.

Syed Hassan Raza, Deputy Commissioner of Narowal, told Dawn that the Sikh pilgrims coming from India will stay at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib for two days.

Syed Naveed Haider, Gujranwala Commissioner and Muhammad Tayyab, Regional Police Officer, visited Kartarpur along with the DC and DPO of Narowal. They reviewed facilities provided to the pilgrims. — **Correspondent**

MULTAN: Form workers sort out potatoes for supply to the market. — APP

Dengue cases on the rise in Multan district

29 suspected patients admitted to Nishtar Hospital in last 24 hours; seven cases already confirmed

By Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: The dengue fever is on the rise in Multan district as the number of the patients testing positive for the virus rose to seven in Nishtar Hospital on Sunday when two more cases surfaced.

According to the hospital's sources, two more patients tested positive for dengue virus at the facility, while, the results of the lab tests of another 29 suspected patients were awaited.

The sources say that all these 29 patients were admitted to the hospital within the last 24 hours.

Keeping in view the rising number of dengue cases in the district, the Nishtar Hospital's management has increased the beds to 50 from 39, they say.

Meanwhile, the district health officials, got registered five FIRs against Multan's three restaurants and two factory owners after the detection of dengue larva from their business places during the last 24 hours.

District Health Authority (DHA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr Soban Zia says that 120 notices have been served on the entities which failed to implement dengue SOPs.

He added that the DHA's anti-dengue wing's staff strength has also been increased to 859 to take effective preventive measures against the virus.

TEACHER HELD: Luddan police in Vehari district claimed on Sunday to have arrested a private school's teacher on the charges of torturing a student.

According to the district police, a private school teacher, Hakim Ali, allegedly subjected his student Tayyub Nawaz to torture in the classroom.

On the complaint of the victim's uncle, Irshad Hussain, Luddan police registered a case against the teacher, who was arrested and lodged in police lock-up.

GIRL HARASSED: Jalilabad police in Multan registered a case on Sunday against an unidentifiedman for allegedly sexually harassing and teasing a girl student.

According to the police sources, Belal, father of a girl 'F' complained that his daughter was being sexually harassed daily by an unidentified man while returning from school, for the last few days. He added the suspect would catcall and touch his daughter.

Acting on the complaint, Jalilabad police registered a case against the unidentified suspect and launched a hunt for him.

MURDER CASE: The police registered a murder case against unknown persons after a man succumbed to his burns on Sunday at Nishtar Hospital.

According to Rescue 1122 officials, they were informed that one Fayyaz, a resident ofChak No 4-T, was making a bonfire near his house to avoid cold when he was engulfed by flames.

They say that the victim suffered serious burns on his body and was shifted to Nishtar Hospital, where he succumbed to his burns.

However, Makhdum Rashid police, after visiting the scene and later the hospital, found the circumstances of the fire incident suspicious and registered a murder case against unknown suspects and started investigation.

TODDLER DROWNS: A two-year-old boy allegedly drowned in a small canal near Hasilwala in Kahroerepucca tehsil of Lodhran district.

According to Rescuers 1122, a toddler, Ali Nawaz (2), son of Abbas, was playing along the bank of the four feet deep small canal when he accidentally fell into the water and drowned.

The rescuers reaching the scene shifted the boy to Kahrorepucca THQ Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead and handed over the body to his parents.

SHOP ROBBERY: Two unidentified men allegedly took away goods worth about Rs60,000 from a shop after throwing red chilies in the shopkeeper's eyes at Chak No 433-EB.

As per police, two unidentified suspects arrived at Usman's shop in the village and asked him to pack different items, totally worth Rs60,000. When Usman demand the payment, the suspects threw red chilies in his eyes and fled away with the goods. Sahooka police in Vehari district registered the case.

Two robbery-cum-rape suspects killed in 'encounter'

By Our Correspondent

SARGODHA: Police claimed that two suspects, S and I, who raped two women during a robbery in the Chak 44SB area of Atta Shaheed police station, have been killed in a police encounter.

According to the police, Saddar DSP Qaiser Abbas Gujjar and Atta Shaheed SHO, during an operation, surrounded the four dacoity suspects in village 44SB.

During the encounter, police claimed that two dacoits were killed by the firing of their own accomplices during an exchange of fire. Both the deceased suspected dacoits were involved in a gang-rape incident at a home a few days ago, police said.

Police sources claimed that the said accused had earlier committed four similar dacoity-cum-rape of women in the Gujrat district and were most wanted in other cases.

The sources further claimed that the family of S had also alleged that he used to rape females of his own family as well and no one dared to lodge a complaint against him.

Police said a search operation was ongoing in the area to arrest the two escaping dacoits.

In another incident, an accused in a kidnapping and murder of a child was killed in an encounter.

As per police sources, a team led by Quaidabad SHO was formed to arrest accused Sajid. The team, on a tip-off, erected a blockade on the Shah Wala Jungle, Runda Road to arrest the accused.

Police claimed that a motorcycle ridden by three armed men started firing at the police vehicle. Police claimed the police party opened aerial fire in self-defense. After the firing stopped, police said, body of Sajid was found during a sweep of the area.

Police claimed that he was killed by the firing of his own associates. Police said the co-accused fled the scene on the motorcycle and teams had been formed and dispatched to search for them.

Police said Sajid was the main accused in the kidnapping for a ransom of Rs10 million and murder of a student in Khushab.

Sher Shah Suri-era inn uncovered near Harappan ruins

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Punjab government's archaeological directorate has begun scientific excavations at four archaeological sites and claims to have excavated a 16th century Sher Shah Suri inn (rest area) near the Harappan ruins.

The inn siteis located on the south side of the main Sher Shah Suri Road. It was constructed during the time of Sher Shah Suri (1540-1545 AD) for resting places and postal convoys.

The archaeological excavations have exposed the main gateway on the northern side, along with three rooms on both sides of the gateway. A triangular area (45x30 meters) has been exposed, revealing numerous small rooms with an entrance.

The Punjab Tourism, Archaeology and Museums department had constituted a 10-member archaeological team under the supervision of archaeology director general and initiated scientific excavations at the site.

Officials say the Harappa excavation has been started in the month of November because a cool winter season is required for the excavation.

The excavation team said the bricks found at the site were of Harappan era with features of the Sher Shah Suri era like veranda, restoration rooms, water pond etc. "More excavation will tell us about the lifestyle of people living here. Hopefully more Harappan features will be unearthed," the team said.

The official said that all artifacts recovered would be numbered, chemically analysed in a lab and then exhibited at a museum for education and research purposes.

The archaeological directorate officials said the inn structure was built with Harappan period bricks around a central courtyard, dating back to the mature Harappan period. They said the excavation team had discovered terracotta figurines, gaming objects, fragments of bangles, wheels, toy cart, and a significant faience seal or tablet.

Punjab Tourism Secretary Dr Ehsan Bhutta, who reached the site on Sunday, told *Dawn* that the Punjab government had initiated an ADP-approved Rs800 million project for the excavation of four sites – Harappa; Taxila; Rohtas Fort and Tila Joggian; and Cholistan desert forts.

"Rohtas and Harappa excavations have started, while the work on the remaining two sites will begin soon," he added.